

“We cannot allow employers to hide behind a mere 180 days and potentially successfully carry out pay discrimination day after day,” said Kaptur, the most senior woman in the House of Representatives and a long-time advocate for workers’ rights. She also emphasized that the current climate makes pay discrimination even more despicable.

The Paycheck Fairness Act (H.R. 12) will strengthen the Equal Pay Act and close loopholes that have allowed many employers to avoid responsibility for discriminatory pay. The bill passed by a vote of 256 for to 163 against. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, women only make 78 cents for every dollar earned by a man.

The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act (H.R. 11) would clarify that every paycheck or other compensation resulting from an earlier discriminatory pay decision constitutes a violation of the Civil Rights Act

. As long as workers file their charges within 180 days of a discriminatory paycheck, their charges would be considered timely. This was the law prior to a Supreme Court’s May 2007 decision. The bill passed by a vote of 247 for to 171 against.

According to published reports, the Ledbetter decision has already been cited in more than 300 discrimination cases. Not only have pay discrimination cases been adversely impacted, but protections guaranteed by the Fair Housing Act, Title IX, and the Eight Amendment have also been affected.

The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act would apply to workers who file claims of discrimination on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, religion, age, or disability.

Lilly Ledbetter worked for nearly 20 years at a Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company. She sued the company after learning that she was paid less than her male counterparts at the facility, despite having more experience than several of them. A jury found that her employer had unlawfully discriminated against her on the basis of sex. However, the Supreme Court said that Ledbetter had waited too long to sue for pay discrimination, despite the fact that she filed a charge with the U.S.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

as soon as she received an anonymous note alerting her to pay discrimination.

While Ledbetter filed her charge within 180 days of receiving discriminatory pay, the court ruled that, since Ledbetter did not raise a claim within 180 days of the employer's decision to pay her less, she could not receive any relief. Under this Supreme Court decision, employees in Ledbetter's position would be forced to live with discriminatory paychecks for the rest of their careers.